2014 Conference on Philanthropy location revealed

The wait is over!

We promised you that we would reveal the location of the 2014 Conference on Philanthropy and now we can! We're also ready to announce the winners of our contest.

Click here for the location and to find out who won our contest!
2014 Conference on Philanthropy Co-Chairs Announced

PSI is pleased to announce the co-chairs for the 14th PSI Conference on Philanthropy. Two leading fundraisers, LuAnn Davis, Vice President for Advancement at Union College, and Karen Johnson, President of Rocky Mountain Adventist Healthcare Foundation, have graciously agreed to guide the conference with their visionary thinking, enthusiasm and passion for professional development and for helping other organizations transform their fundraising efforts.

A note from our co-chairs:

We are looking forward to serving as co-chairs for the 14th PSI Conference on Philanthropy. This conference will be a great opportunity to network with others in the field of philanthropy and grow professionally through attendance at the various sessions and tracks.

We know that you will truly benefit from the outstanding presenters and sessions that are being developed to lead you to the next level in your world of fundraising. Certainly having the time to visit with other professionals in the same area of expertise as you are will be helpful to you. And you will be sharing your knowledge with colleagues as you take full advantage of the many opportunities available at this conference.

The Planning Committee is working diligently to make sure that we do everything we can to meet your needs in regard to professional development. We also want to help your organization grow in its fundraising efforts as you work to make a difference in the lives of people.

Please put these dates on your calendar and make plans to join us in Baltimore for the next PSI Conference on Philanthropy. We look forward to seeing you there.

Sincerely,
The Pleasure of Finding Things Out!

by Lilya Wagner, Ed.D. CFRE

A noted American physicist, Richard Feynman, wrote in his book, The Pleasure of Finding Things Out, that scientific knowledge enables us to do all kinds of things and that scientific knowledge is an enabling power to do either good or bad. "Another value of science," he stated, "is the fun called intellectual enjoyment which some people get from reading and learning and thinking about it, and which others get from working in it."

I’m a firm believer on the pleasure of finding things out. Often I’m asked where I find up-to-date, relevant, accurate and even inspirational information about my profession. I could overwhelm you with possible resources, but first let me give you some criteria by which to evaluate your efforts to acquire knowledge. With so much information available, we no longer need to dig for information but now need to know how to evaluate on what to spend time, effort and money. So, a few guidelines on how to choose the best:

1. Whether you’re considering books, Internet resources, seminars, consultant offerings, webinars, conferences, or the many other avenues of information gathering, ask whether the offering is research based and combined with successful experience. Theoretical discussions are good, but some practical experience is essential to know if what is suggested really works.

2. Avoid anything that has the “ten easy steps” connotation or promise. We do not work in a mindless profession. We think about what we do. We’re not automatons—press a button and the fundraiser goes into action! There really are no “ten easy steps.” There are principles and practices that we internalize and adapt professionally. (Read more...)
Half of Fundraisers in the Top Job Would Like to Quit

Dissatisfaction Among Fundraisers Blamed on CEOs

by Jennifer Berkshire

One in four nonprofit leaders is so disappointed in fundraising at his or her organization that the last person in the job was fired, according to a new national study to be released this week. And milder frustration is rampant: One in three executives is at best lukewarm about the person now holding the top development job.

But chief fundraisers have their own complaints about CEO’s, boards, and the support their organizations have given them. As a result, many of them are looking to leave their jobs—or possibly leave fundraising altogether, the survey found. (Read more...)

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PSI Offers Development Planning Workshop

“Planning?! We’re too busy to plan!” How many times have you felt this way? If you are the sole fundraiser or if fundraising is just one of the many hats you wear at your organization you cannot afford NOT to take time to plan. Today many donors demand to see a plan before they decide to give, a plan will avoid unrealistic requirements and expectations from our organizations, and besides, how will you know when you’ve arrived if you don’t know where you’re going?

The Development Planning Workshop is a hands-on, one day event geared to address this very problem. Held from 8:00 am – 3:00 pm August 7th at the Rosen Shingle Creek Resort in Orlando, FL, the workshop is open to all PSI members, NAD and GC organizations, and ASI members at the cost of $25 per organization (multiple individuals from the same organization may attend).

Attendees should bring their funding needs, questions and concerns and be prepared to work. Each attendee will leave with an actionable, manageable fundraising plan that can be executed to meet their specific needs with their unique set of resources.
Space is limited and attendees will be admitted on a first come, first served basis. To register for this event contact Lorena Hernandez at Lorena.Hernandez@nad.adventist.org or 301-680-6133. For more information about this or other PSI offerings contact Kristin Priest at Kristin.Priest@nad.adventist.org or 301-680-6134.

ASI has graciously extended their discounted room rate to workshop attendees. To register please use this link: https://booking.ihotelier.com/istay/istay.jsp?groupId=900763&hotelID=6840 or if calling, mention the ASI room rate of $119 per night.

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**PSI Announces 2013 Executive Leadership Institute**

PSI invites senior fundraising professionals and executives to attend the **2013 Executive Leadership Institute (ELI)** held August 6-7 (beginning at 1:00 pm on the 6th and ending by 3:00 pm on the 7th) at the Rosen Shingle Creek Resort in Orlando, FL.

In the March 13 issue of Fundraising Digest Weekly, their “Top Gifts of the Week” included a $50 million gift to fund a master of fine arts program, $15 million for scholarships and faculty research, and $3.7 million to upgrade technology at a foundation. Can you picture your organization on this list?

And more importantly, are you expected to bring gifts of this size to your organization and are those expectations realistic? The emphasis on major gifts as the major source of revenue has increased at a steady pace, yet major donors have changed over time, especially in recent years. We invite you to attend this seminar for two reasons—learn about the latest trends and behaviors of major gift donors, and share your expertise and experiences with colleagues at your professional level. Our facilitator, Erik Daubert, will lead us in a discussion of the most up-to-date approaches to major gifts, how major gift decision-making has been modified, how to reinvigorate the traditional processes for seeking major gifts but adding current perspectives and practices, and how to expand your major gift potential. Go beyond
the “what is” and enter the world of “can be.”

There is a $75 registration fee associated with this event. Space is limited and attendees meeting ELI criteria (see below) will be admitted on a first come, first serve basis. To register for this event contact Lorena Hernandez at Lorena.Hernandez@nad.adventist.org or 301-680-6133. For more information about this or other PSI offerings contact Lilya Wagner at Lilya.Wagner@nad.adventist.org or 301-680-6130.

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ELI Eligibility Criteria (At least two of the following four):

- Chief philanthropy officer with a fundraising staff of three or more
- CEO/president/executive-level staff member with fundraising personnel reporting to you directly or indirectly
- Certification (e.g. CFRE, FAHP, certificate in fundraising management)
- Five years of full-time leadership experience that includes fundraising

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**Mind the Gap**

Surveys expose differences in how chief development officers and institutional leaders view their fundraising roles

By Rae Goldsmith

If good communication is the key to a successful relationship, it might be time for chief fundraisers and their institutional CEOs to consider couples counseling.

A recent survey of community college presidents and chief development officers shows, for example, that while 82 percent of presidents say they are comfortable asking for gifts, just
55 percent of fundraisers say the same of presidents.

A similar survey of heads and fundraisers at independent schools reveals that 88 percent of fundraisers believe they adequately prepare their school heads for meetings with donors, compared with 73 percent of heads who agree that they are adequately prepared by their chief fundraisers. This means, of course, that more than 25 percent of heads do not agree that they are being well-prepared. (Read more...)

(This article appeared in the November/December 2012 issue of CURRENTS. Reprinted with permission.)

Is Presentation More Important Than Content Itself?

by Jordan Kasteler

Is content presentation more important than content itself?

In a word: Absolutely.

Yes, you’ve heard the “(Quality) Content is King” argument for years, and I’d never deny that that having quality, original, must-read content is essential to any content strategy.

But the visual presentation is your first impression with the Web visitor: it’s what makes the visitor decide whether or not to consume the content in the first place. (Read more...)

(Reprinted with the permission of Search Engine Land.)

Selecting a List, Testing it Twice

by Pamela Barden

The economy must be truly improving, as I’m involved in more and more conversations about the need to invest in donor acquisition. For most nonprofits, today’s reality isn’t too encouraging. The Agitator summed it up like this last week:
"The average nonprofit has a 60 to 70% chance of getting an additional contribution from existing donors; a 20 to 40% probability of getting a gift from a lapsed donor; but less than a 2% chance of receiving a gift from a prospect."

Ignoring donor acquisition is one way to commit career suicide, since nonprofits lose a percentage of donors every year without even trying. Whether you call it churn or attrition, it's reality.

And that reality means that doing something to acquire new donors is essential. (Read more...)

(This article originally appeared in the April 5, 2012 edition of *Today in Fundraising.* Reprinted with permission. [Click here to subscribe.](#))

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**A Special Feature from Our Director**

“**Choices are the hinges of destiny.**” - attributed to both Edwin Markham and Pythagoras.

This quote is just one example from the new “Weekly Inspirational Gift” email sent out every Monday morning from Dr. Lilya Wagner, Director of Philanthropic Service for Institutions.

Dr. Wagner points out that although you are doing highly significant work each day for your institution; don’t forget to take time for yourself.

This "Weekly Inspirational Gift" is one of the many resources available to our members. Our website offers a wealth of information and inspiration, and we hope you will take some time to look around the site. You may be missing some great information that can help you in your fundraising efforts.
Visit our website here:
http://philanthropicservice.com

If you would like to receive the short Weekly Inspirational Message from PSI please send your email address to Mark.Lindemann@nad.adventist.org

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You are receiving this enewsletter because you have asked to be on a PSI list in the past, or have were signed up a PSI event. Remaining on this list allows you to find out about new scholarship, events, and other important happenings at PSI.

Our mailing address is:
Philanthropic Service for Institutions
12501 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring, MD 20904

Add us to your address book
unsubscribe from this list update subscription preferences

Spam
Not spam
Forget previous vote
The wait is over!

We’re so happy to announce that the next **PSI Conference on Philanthropy** will be held June 25-27, 2014, in **Baltimore, Maryland’s historic Inner Harbor.**

This premier event is just about 15 months away, which gives you time to save the date and start planning around it. In the weeks and months to come we’ll be sending out notices about registration rates and cut-off dates as well as other relevant information that you’ll need going forward including a link to our conference website (coming in May) and a look at our new conference logo.

To follow conference updates in real-time, please follow us on Twitter, and join us on PSI’s Conference Facebook page (we’ll send you a link when the page is live). Also, if you aren’t on our eDollar mailing list you can opt in here. You can also be added to our mailing list by contacting Mark Lindemann.

Before we announced the conference location, we offered one of you the chance to win a free conference registration, and four others of you a chance to receive a $25 Amazon gift card.

It wasn’t an easy task, but 24 of you correctly guessed the conference location, and became eligible for the drawing.

The winner of the free conference registration is: **Spencer Hannah** of Campion Academy, and the winners of the Amazon gift cards are: **Mark Haynal, Jean Kellner, Barbara Willis, and Andrea Starr-Tagalog.** Please contact Kristin Priest at Kristin.Priest@nad.adventist.org to find out how to collect or redeem your prize.

We know the clues weren’t easy, so here are the solutions below to the email, Facebook and Twitter clues. We hope it was as much fun trying to figure them out as it was creating them.

Thanks again and keep checking in with us. We look forward to seeing you in Baltimore for a truly great learning event and networking opportunity.
EMAIL CLUE #1: The siblings George and Fred would say that you missed your chance three spaces ago.

Email Clue #1 Answer: Another word for male siblings is brothers. The brothers George and Fred are the famous Parker Brothers. Monopoly is a game produced by Parker Brothers. On the Monopoly board are spaces named Chance, and one particular Chance space is three spaces behind the B & O Railroad space…which of course is tied deeply to Baltimore.

FACEBOOK CLUE #1: A dog beating a racecar never loses its luster.

Facebook Clue #1 Answer: A dog and a racecar are both shiny metallic game pieces in Monopoly.

TWITTER CLUE #1: George and Fred have nothing to do with Harry Potter.

Twitter Clue #1 Answer: If you did a Google search for George and Fred (and yes…most of you did), the brothers George and Fred Weasley from Harry Potter would have popped to the top of your results…which may have made you think we were having the conference at Hogwarts School of Magic. Oh you silly Muggles.

EMAIL CLUE #2: You wouldn't have the whole picture if I said, "Outer peninsula"...unless of course you embraced the power of negative thinking.

Email Clue #2 Answer: Photo negatives show the opposite colors of the objects within them…and with some creative thinking you can think negatively with words. The opposite word of Outer…is Inner. The opposite of peninsula (or land surrounded on three sides with water) is a bay or harbor (water surrounded on three sides by land). The Inner Harbor is synonymous with the beauty, history and excitement of Baltimore.

FACEBOOK CLUE #2: If you have already begun mapping your run or counting your calories…stop.”

Facebook Clue #2 Answer: We had a lot of guesses for Boston as the conference location after the first clue. There’s a well-known runners area on the outer peninsula. That was our attempt to redirect your focus…

TWITTER CLUE #2: Two parts hydrogen...one part oxygen.

Answer: H2O…water of course…which has shaped the city.
Facebook Clue #3 Answer: The three-color pieces are from the flag that flew over Fort McHenry, and inspired the Star Spangled Banner.

Email Clue #3 Answer: The black and white photo is a photo of the flag that flew over Fort McHenry. A Google image search would have given you the answer.

Twitter Clue #3: Cannon balls no longer fly, yet spheres of yarn still dot the sky.

Facebook Clue #3 Answer: Canon Balls no longer fly from Fort McHenry, but baseballs...made in part with tightly spun yarn...are hit out of Camden Yards weekly by the Baltimore Orioles.

Email Clue #4: "I have 11 sisters on three continents: Alexandria, Ashkelon, Bremerhaven, Gbarnga, Genoa, Kawasaki, Luxor, Odessa, Piraeus, Rotterdam and Xiamen."

Email Clue #4 Answer: Baltimore has 11 sister cities on three continents. Alexandria, Egypt; Ashkelon, Israel; Bremerhaven, Germany; Gbarnga, Liberia;
Genoa, Italy; Kawasaki, Japan; Luxor, Egypt; Odessa, Ukraine; Piraeus, Greece; Rotterdam, Netherlands; and Xiamen, China.

FACEBOOK CLUE #4: Francis Stars Scott And Key Stripes.

**Facebook Clue #4 Answer:** There are two clues blended together. “Francis Scott Key”…wrote the Star Spangled Banner. A song about the American “Stars and Stripes.”

TWITTER CLUE #4: A monumental city…most would agree, its sea elevation is a three and a three.

**Twitter Clue #4 Answer:** Baltimore is also known as Monument City, and is 33ft above sea level.
A noted American physicist, Richard Feynman, wrote in his book, The Pleasure of Finding Things Out, that scientific knowledge enables us to do all kinds of things and that scientific knowledge is an enabling power to do either good or bad. "Another value of science," he stated, "is the fun called intellectual enjoyment which some people get from reading and learning and thinking about it, and which others get from working in it."

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2. Avoid anything that has the “ten easy steps” connotation or promise. We do not work in a mindless profession. We think about what we do. We’re not automatons—press a button and the fundraiser goes into action! There really are no “ten easy steps.” There are principles and practices that we internalize and adapt professionally.

3. While historical perspectives are valuable and help understand our context, if we will invest in professional development, we need to make sure it’s current. What worked yesterday may no longer work today. An example is how major donor behaviors have changed over time, changing from reactive to proactive actions. Another example is how we conduct church capital campaigns have morphed from dinner and pledge cards to a thoughtful and careful process that considers timelines, donors at levels of giving, careful campaign organization and the rest.
4. The best professional standards are set by some influential and significant organizations. A leading one is the School of Philanthropy at Indiana University and The Fund Raising school. Professional associations like the Association of Fundraising Professionals are also standard bearers. Study what their standards are and develop your criteria for what is the best information source.

5. Determine if the “expert” really is an expert in the area which is being presented. Does the author of a “how to” book on fundraising actually have experience in what he or she is writing about? How tested and proven is the content being presented? Are the authorities being quoted credible and successful in what they propose?

6. Some resources are specific to organization types, such as the Council for Advancement and Support of Education, which is relevant to higher education in particular. While you can certainly learn from these, lean toward those that are more specific to what you do.

I suggest you develop a checklist, even if just a few pointers you store in your mind, outlining what’s worth the time, money and effort you expend and sharing these with your colleagues through PSI’s website and other information sources. Apply the criteria listed above, and criteria you develop for yourself, and choose the best, especially the best of what’s suitable for your learning.

Please notice the Doubling Your Dollar column on the home page of PSI’s website. We will periodically list organizations, books, journals, training offerings, and other professional development opportunities and materials which we believe hold to the highest professional standards and practices.

I encourage you and challenge you to engage and immerse yourself in “the pleasure of finding things out!”
Half of Fundraisers in the Top Job Would Like to Quit

By Jennifer C. Berkshire

One in four nonprofit leaders is so disappointed in fundraising at his or her organization that the last person in the job was fired, according to a new national study to be released this week. And milder frustration is rampant: One in three executives is at best lukewarm about the person now holding the top development job.

But chief fundraisers have their own complaints about CEO’s, boards, and the support their organizations have given them. As a result, many of them are looking to leave their jobs—or possibly leave fundraising altogether, the survey found.

The study, one of the biggest national surveys of its kind, gathered data from more than 2,700 development directors and charity heads who work at organizations of different sizes and missions. Among the key findings:

• Half of the chief fundraisers plan to leave their jobs within two years or less. Forty percent are thinking about leaving fundraising entirely.

• More than half of the executive directors reported that they can’t find well-qualified people to run their fundraising staffs.

• At many nonprofits, the position of development director has been vacant for months—or even years.

While nonprofit leaders have long regarded the “revolving door” phenomenon among development directors as a staffing problem, the survey points to something more troublesome, says Marla Cornelius, a senior project director at Compass Point Nonprofit Services and co–author of the study, conducted with the Evelyn & Walter Haas Jr. Fund.

“Too many organizations lack a culture of philanthropy, which means that development directors don’t have the conditions they need to succeed,” she says. “It’s a vicious cycle.”
Charity Leaders Faulted

The blame for such high levels of dissatisfaction among fundraisers must be pinned squarely on charity leaders, says Robbe Healey, a member of the board of the Association of Fundraising Professionals who served as a research adviser for the study.

“The reason that organizations have a hard time keeping competent development staff is that too many nonprofit leaders don’t understand fund-raising,” says Ms. Healey, vice president of philanthropy at Simpson Senior Services, a nonprofit retirement community. “A skilled and experienced development director is not going to hook their reputation to your lack of readiness.”

A Quality Shortage

But talented fundraisers, the survey indicates, can take a long time for organizations to find. At organizations reporting the lack of a development director, the spot had been vacant for a median of six months.

Mary Denton, executive director of Sunny Hills Services, a child-welfare organization in San Anselmo, Calif., says she spent four months last year searching for a development director.

No candidates seemed to have experience in all of the fundraising activities that Sunny Hills requires, including special events, grant seeking, and attracting major donors. “It’s a challenging spot to fill,” says Ms. Denton.

She ultimately found someone whom she describes as ideal—but it happened only by chance. Janet Wilkes, who started in the position last May, had been taking a break from her fundraising career when she discovered Ms. Denton’s group while searching for a golf course by the same name. Ms. Wilkes sent in her résumé on a lark—and got the job.

Such a happy ending may be unusual, though. One in four executives told the survey that his or her development director lacked key fundraising skills.

Part of a Team

Such high levels of dissatisfaction with fundraisers may stem at least in part from a perception problem among charity leaders.

“If the entirety of your fundraising operation comes down to a single individual, there is no
way you’re going to be satisfied with his or her performance,” says Ms. Cornelius.

Pilar Gonzales, director of philanthropic partnerships at the International Development Exchange, says that too many CEO’s expect fundraisers to embody contradictory traits.

“They want someone bold and assertive enough to be good at asking for money, but also able to sit quietly for hours to write a grant,” says Ms. Gonzales. “Those are actually different kinds of fundraisers.”

The organizations identified in the study as “high performing” are far more likely to define fundraising not as a solo position for which a single individual is responsible but as a team enterprise involving the entire organization. (The study defines high performers as charities that rate their overall fundraising program as very effective, and have created a broad and loyal pool of donors.)

“When you look at the difference between organizations that are successful at fundraising and those that are failing, institutional embrace is really the key difference,” says Ms. Healey.

Over the past 10 years, the fundraising department at the Perkins School for the Blind has crossed from one side of the divide to the other.

What was once a small, relatively isolated unit is now seen as key to the charity’s overall mission.

“Perkins has come to regard philanthropy as essential,” says Kathleen Sheehan, executive director of the Perkins Trust, which just completed a seven-year, $130-million fundraising campaign. “We feel valued as a department, which means that our development staff feel more rewarded professionally.”

**All Aboard**

Charities that succeed at fundraising differ from those that struggle in one key way, according to William Sturtevant, a senior fundraiser at the University of Illinois Foundation: Their leaders are deeply involved in raising money.

“It isn’t just the executives who need to be engaged in fundraising, but the board members too. That’s profoundly important,” says Mr. Sturtevant, who also works as a consultant to other charities.

But while CEO’s in the survey would seem to share his view that boards play an important
role in fundraising, many think their boards are not doing enough to help raise money.

Seventy-five percent of the executive directors said their trustees were insufficiently involved in raising money for their charities. Thirty-six percent said their boards had no fundraising committees, and 17 percent of CEO’s said their boards had no involvement in fundraising at all.

“If someone joins a board and philanthropy isn’t seen as part of his or her role, that’s a very difficult thing to change,” says Heather Malin, director of institutional advancement at the Cancer Research Institute. And even boards with active fundraising committees may not share a deep commitment to helping the charity raise money.

“Too often boards associate development with desperation and with having to give money themselves,” says Ms. Malin.

Changing Culture

Charity leaders, the study concluded, need to take steps to improve the conditions that have led them to hire too many underqualified fundraisers who deliver disappointing performance and then either bolt or are pushed out the door.

“When you start to address the areas that need help—support for fund-raising, board engagement—you not only create the conditions for success, but you make your organization a much more attractive place to work,” says Ms. Cornelius.

Among the study’s calls for action:

• Elevate the fundraising profession by promoting it as a rewarding career, and one that plays a central role in helping charities create social change.

• Strengthen and diversify the talent pool, especially by recruiting more minorities and young people.

• Train board members more thoroughly, emphasizing partnerships with the charity’s executives as well as nuts-and-bolts fundraising skills.

• Spread accountability for fundraising throughout the organization.

• Encourage grant makers to help charities build their fund-raising leadership, such as by offering guidance when a development director leaves.
Linda Wood, senior director of leadership and grant making at the Evelyn & Walter Haas Jr. Fund, says her group sees helping charities cultivate stronger fundraising talent as part of its mission to effect social change.

“We hope the study will jump–start a national conversation about how we all can help organizations be more successful getting the funding they need to reach their goals,” says Ms. Wood.

Ms. Malin, of the Cancer Research Institute, believes changes like those proposed in the study can’t come soon enough.

“Whether a development director succeeds or fails often comes down to decisions that are made by the leadership of an organization,” she says. “But when you set up development to be successful, you set up the whole organization to succeed.”

Is Presentation More Important Than Content Itself?

http://searchengineland.com/is-presentation-more-important-than-content-itself-123427

Jun 12, 2012 at 11:41am ET by Jordan Kasteler

Is content presentation more important than content itself?

In a word: Absolutely.

Yes, you’ve heard the “(Quality) Content is King” argument for years, and I’d never deny that that having quality, original, must-read content is essential to any content strategy.

But the visual presentation is your first impression with the Web visitor: it’s what makes the visitor decide whether or not to consume the content in the first place.

If your content looks boring, time-consuming, salesy, or unprofessional, your visitor will click out of your content before reading the first paragraph.

Fact: We All Judge Books By Their Covers

We also judge online content a whole lot faster than we do books. You only have a few precious seconds to grab your audience’s attention before they close your website or head back to the SERPs.

Your content presentation is the clinching factor that holds an audience’s attention long enough for you to grab them with your actual content. It doesn’t matter how mind-blowingly original or well-crafted your content is: if your audience doesn’t stick around to consume it, why bother creating it?

Content Is Becoming More Visual Every Day

Gone are the days when users are satisfied with a mere blog post or status post. Infographics, video and infovideo creation has skyrocketed. Web design has exploded, evolving from pure function into a new art form.
The image–based Pinterest is now the third most popular social network in the country (with an incredible 59% of users admitting they've purchased something they saw on the site).

Facebook transformed their text–friendly Wall into a more image–friendly Timeline. Brands are no longer expected to merely tweet or post status updates; they're expected to maintain visual pinboards on Pinterest, post pictures on Instagram, and reblog images on Tumblr.

But creating more visual content makes sense: why tell a consumer about your brand when you can show them? Why merely talk about a subject when you can illustrate it?

It's the best form of multi–tasking there is: while visitors are reading your content, they're taking in the images, the typography, the styling, the Web design. They'll leave your site knowing about you, not just your topic.

Another reason to take visualization into account? People understand visualized information better, as this infographic by J6Design illustrates:
People are suffering information overload

Long wordy reports & boring DIY charts take too much effort to interpret. Does this sound like your business?

ABC + data viz = heart

The solution is data visualization or infographics

83% of learning occurs visually

Images are easier to digest

Infographics transform plain facts into visuals that are easy to understand. What data are you not explaining clearly?

Images are memorable

Colour, contrast, rhythm & shapes make complex data in graphics easily remembered. Same reason why you remember TV ads.

Would you like people to remember your message but not have to pay big $$$ for a TV ad?
Images are more appealing

Clever infographics attract your eye, arouse interest, appeal to your curiosity, make you smile & compel you to absorb data. Does your data need to be more appealing?

Infographics get shared

Clever infographics are shared on websites, blogs & social media. Print versions are shared in newspapers & magazines. This all generates valuable brand awareness (& boosts your SEO). Would you like to go viral?

Make you an industry leader

No matter how boring your industry, data viz can help EVERY business look like the leader. How could you use data viz in your business?

Created by www.j6design.com.au

Search & Social Benefits Of Good Content Presentation

Looks aren’t just essential for content consumption: they’re also beneficial to your brand’s SEO and social strategies, too.

1. Increasing Your SERP Click–Through Rate.

Google Instant Preview offers users a quick look at the page they’re about to click on. If they’re debating between the top 3 rankings and yours delivers an instant visual punch, they’re more likely to click on yours. The more professional or eye-catching your design, the higher your CTR will be if the searcher has Google’s preview feature enabled.

2. Lowering Bounce Rates.

Again, your site design and layout is the first impression your site makes. Arriving at an overly salesy, intimidating, or text-heavy landing page is the equivalent of turning down a dark alley: your visitors want to get out there as soon as possible. Pull them in with your visuals and they won’t feel the urge to flee.


We like to share things we haven’t seen before. Unique presentation and eye-catching visuals make us want to share content with others. It’s why infographics get hundreds more shares than a well-written article with the same data. It’s why a funny comic can get a thousand shares before a funny blog post gets ten. And more shares aren’t just good for your social presence: they boost your links, too.

4. Boost Your Credibility.

In an age of a blogosphere oversaturated with would–be Julie & Julias and Perez Hiltons, anyone can be a blogger. Let’s face it: anyone can write an article and get it posted on the Internet.

Your content presentation is what makes you stand out from the amateurs: you’ve hired a graphic designer, a Web designer, or a videographer. You’ve made a clear and conscious effort to look professional. And the more credible you look, the more people will want to read and share your content.


Both Facebook and Google+ have emphasized visuals in recent redesigns, and Pinterest’s visual–based sharing system needs no introduction. Preview images on social network shares help a user decide whether or not to click the link. The more interesting the image, the more
likely they’ll click.

6 Sites That Nail Content Presentation

1. **Evan You’s Take on Internet Censorship.** Open with a great punch and keep the interesting data coming. This site breaks up data into an extremely readable, compelling argument — and the ending call-to-action is a great final touch.

2. **Cracked.com.** Cracked.com is often cited as a great example of linkbait, but the site also deserves props for its strategic formatting. Customized headers and must-read titles grab a reader’s attention immediately. A Cracked.com article rarely goes six lines without including an eye-catching image, so readers aren’t intimidated by the post’s length. Witty captions and frequent page breaks keep readers hooked: one Cracked.com article becomes two, two becomes four, four becomes eleven...and before you know it, you’ve lost an hour reading articles on Cracked.

3. **How to Hack Your Brain.** The page doesn’t look like any health article you’ve ever seen before. It looks new, fresh, young, and a far cry from academic sleep articles, but it’s still packed with information. A unique layout, large fonts, and constant images turn this “sleep hack” into certifiable share bait.

4. **SmashingMagazine.com.** It should come as no surprise that Smashing Magazine, a Web design and development magazine, makes this list. Yet the site is a killer example of what readers want from a digital magazine or blog: it’s friendly, yet professional; it’s easy-to-read, but doesn’t skimp on creativity; and it’s packed with information, yet looks uncluttered on the screen.

5. **The Oatmeal.** Sick of seeing the Oatmeal on content lists yet? Get used to it. Both content-wise and design-wise, creator Matthew Inman nails it. His recent piece on Nikola Tesla packed a miniature biography (and Edison-bashing controversy) into one entertaining and incredibly sharable piece of content.

6. **Brain Pickings.** In addition to curating some of the most gorgeous visual content on the Web, Maria Popova’s brainchild is a visual feast for the eyes in itself. With large, high-quality images, highlighted quotes, and an elegant design, Brain Pickings serves as a stunning virtual display case for the curated content it showcases.

Before You Create the Content, Ask Yourself These Questions

Ask yourself: **How will this content be presented?**

Outline the presentation before you create the content. Ask yourself what’ll make it unique,
readable, or compelling. Ask yourself what you can do to grab your visitors’ attention as soon as they land on your site.

Ask yourself: what can we do that they haven’t seen before?

There are too many visual possibilities out there for you to limit yourselves to the same old text-and-subheadings song and dance. If you want to get noticed — really noticed — you’ll have to invest in your presentation just as heavily as you do your content.

Opinions expressed in the article are those of the guest author and not necessarily Search Engine Land.

Related Topics:
Direct-mail acquisition beyond offer and creative.

April 5, 2012 By Pamela Barden

The economy must be truly improving, as I'm involved in more and more conversations about the need to invest in donor acquisition. For most nonprofits, today's reality isn't too encouraging. The Agitator summed it up like this last week:

"The average nonprofit has a 60 to 70% chance of getting an additional contribution from existing donors; a 20 to 40% probability of getting a gift from a lapsed donor; but less than a 2% chance of receiving a gift from a prospect."

Ignoring donor acquisition is one way to commit career suicide, since nonprofits lose a percentage of donors every year without even trying. Whether you call it churn or attrition, it's reality.

And that reality means that doing something to acquire new donors is essential.

For some nonprofits, online acquisitions may be enough to stem the tide of donor loss. Events can provide new donors and often a pool of prospects for work over the next several months.

But to acquire a large number of new donors quickly, nonprofits often turn to direct mail. It's cheap (well, compared to an option like direct-response television); you can target a specific geographic area or demographic; and over time you recoup your costs, identify potential major donors and planned-giving prospects, and build a loyal — and profitable — group of supporters.

Success in direct-mail acquisition requires a great offer and terrific creative, plus choosing the right lists to mail to. In my experience, we often fall apart when choosing lists to mail. We look for bargains, mail the same lists over and over, or choose only lists that look very similar to our own donor files. I recently asked my good friend, Donna Packer of Packer List Inc., if there is a better way to approach list rental. Here are her top three tips.
No. 1: Welcome a new member to your family
Develop and cultivate a positive relationship with your list brokers. Make them part of your professional family. Call them instead of e-mailing. Ask them to suggest new options that you haven't considered before — and listen when they tell you why they are suggesting a list that may seem, at first glance, to be a bit out of your comfort zone. Work with them to get the mail dates, quantities and selects you need while staying within your budget.

Ask them to proactively recommend new lists to you when they uncover ones that look like they fit your model of an ideal list composition. Thank them when they do, and again, listen to their reasoning. If your list broker has taken the time to get to know your organization, these suggestions could be right on target. Sometimes we have too much tunnel vision, but the fresh eyes of your list broker can uncover something that has been overlooked. (On the other hand, if you never get new ideas, consider replacing that "family member" with a broker who will work hard for your business. Acquisition is too critical to settle for mediocrity.)

No. 2: Think outside the trapezoid
Don't stop after you identify the traditional lists that are on the market. Ask your broker (you know, your new best friend) to research lists that are not on the market, and approach the development departments with an exchange proposal (if you are willing and able to exchange your list). You will hear a lot of responses like, "No, we don't make our list available for rental or exchange," but you will possibly uncover a few that say, "Wow! I never thought of it before, but we would be interested in exchanging." A direct exchange can be your greatest resource for finding new donors because the list hasn't been overmailed by other mailers. Or, if you can rent a list that no one else has mailed, it can be an unmined treasure.

No. 3: Look at the long-term value of a list
A list you rent (or receive via an exchange) may not perform well when you first mail it. The percent response may be lower than your expectations, and/or the average gift may not be what you need. But often, a long-term value report will show that the donors who came onto your file from what seemed to be a mediocre list just keep giving. When you find that gem of a list, mail it every few months with the confidence that while the results won't look great at first, you are acquiring loyal donors who will continue to be highly profitable two, five, even 10 years from now.

Acquisition is expensive. But it's necessary if your nonprofit is going to continue — even grow — its good work well into the future. Acquisition isn't for the faint of heart, but working with good partners can help you survive and thrive.